

Minutes
Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
May 12, 2016
Acton Memorial Library

Members Present: Bill Alesbury, Peter Berry, Dean Charter (Associate), Walter Foster, Paula Goodwin (Vice-Chair), Ken Sghia-Hughes, Joe Will (Clerk)

Others Present:

Peter Ashton (former Chair), Roland Bartl (Acton Planning Director), Robert Hummel (Acton Assistant Planner), Roland Bourdon (Finance Committee observer), Cathy Fochtman (Acton Recreation Director), Carolyn Kilpatrick (future Associate), David Clough (Acton First Congregational Church)

Paula opened the meeting at 7:33 P.M.

I. Citizen Concerns

- Peter A thanked Walter for the “great job” in taking over the CPC presentation at Town Meeting (TM). Peter (recently-resigned Chair) said that his final responsibility is to host a picnic (cookout at his home beginning around 5:30 or 6 p.m.). He offered 6 dates in June: Thursday 06/09, Thursday 06/16, Sunday 06/19, Tuesday 06/21, Wednesday 06/22, and Thursday 06/23. Robert will set up a Doodle poll to see what dates will work best and will let Peter know.
- Peter B introduced two new CPC members. Bill Alesbury will take Peter A’s place in an at-large position. Bill worked with Peter B on Acton’s Site Plan Special Permits Study Committee. Dean Charter, recently retired as Acton’s Director of Municipal Properties, is a new Associate member. Peter B expects Carolyn Kilpatrick to be appointed an Associate member at the 05/23 Board of Selectmen (BoS) meeting. Once a new member is sworn in by the Town Clerk, s/he should contact both Kim Gorman and Acton’s IT people and ask to be put onto the CPC email shell.
- Peter B and Cathy Fochtman, Acton’s Recreation Director, reviewed the Boxborough TM’s close-vote rejection of Boxborough Recreation’s \$40K project in support of the completion of the T.J. O’Grady Skatepark.
 - The Boxborough BoS recommended against the funding 3-2. The Finance Committee voted against it 5-0 and had one very vocal member who “railed” against it, citing concerns over drug activities that occur there.
 - A number of residents were negative towards a skatepark. Also a concern was that the skatepark was in Acton, not in Boxborough.
 - Cathy gave the Boxborough Recreation Commission lots of credit for trying hard to rally support for the skatepark. It was also pointed out that:
 - § Acton’s Deputy Police Chief Rich Burrows looked over 10 years of police reports and found no calls for drug activity at the skatepark.
 - § New CPA bylaws encourage town funding of regional projects.
 - § The skatepark is serving kids in the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools (ABRS) and the skatepark is adjacent to ABRS District property.

– Cathy couldn't remember the (hand-raising) vote count, but Mitzi Weil of the Boxborough Recreation Commission said it was very close and had she acted more quickly she would have moved for a recount.

Cathy proposed that the CPC allow her the opportunity to seek other sources for the \$40K for Phase 2 of the project. Possibilities:

– The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has a crowd-funding opportunity opening 06/06. Applications are due 07/07. Projects are selected by 07/14. The crowd-funding window is 08/23 to 09/23. Cathy expects to get approval soon for pursuing this from Acton's Town Manager and believes that Recreation could work effectively with such a project.

– Establish a campaign for corporate donors, providing such with the opportunity to get signage recognition at the skatepark. This has been done, for example, at Goward Playground and Veterans' Field. First step again would be to get approval from the Town Manager.

– Completing the skatepark is a two-phase project. Phase 1 is the skate bowl. Cathy has just contracted with a company from Florida to do the construction for \$75K. That leaves \$25K from the Phase 1 CPA grant. She would like CPC to approve carrying over any Phase 1 contingency \$ to help with completing Phase 2.

– Peter B says raising money from an additional source meets out concept of funding from other resources. He has no problem with that. Peter is not sure, however, that we have the flexibility to carry over unused \$ from Phase 1 as Cathy proposes. This might need another vote at another TM. In any case, we can't vote at this meeting as it's not on the agenda.

– Ken: if you can fund it through other sources to build this year, great! Cathy could proceed with plans to raise \$ elsewhere and see where it goes, then if the \$25K is needed, she can come back to talk with us about it. Ken has no problem with having the Phase 1 \$ released for the rest of the project. What he asks is that Cathy keep the CPC in the loop.

– Walter: On other projects with overage or underage, we've looked at things holistically. Doing that here can guide us as well.

– Roland Bartl: TM did not stipulate other funding considerations. The award letter follows what was done at TM. An article lives for 3 yr and 1 mo and then goes away. A project must commence in 3 yr and 1 mo, or the \$ can no longer be accessed (unless there's been an exception made — didn't happen at this TM). The skate bowl grant was in 2014. We can go on DocuShare to see the CPC folder on how the project was presented and the 2014 TM vote on that project. Maybe it was 2013. Cathy will update the CPC on this by email.

II. Minutes of February 25, 2016 (Executive and Open Sessions)

- Per Roland Bartl: We cannot vote on Executive Session minutes at this time as these minutes are not yet ready to become public documents.
- It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to approve the open session minutes as presented.

III. Annual Town Meeting - Debriefing

- Walter did an awesome job of presenting.
- Per Susan, the feedback on the purchase of the 176 Central Street parcel was extremely positive. Her sense was that, to many, this is the best move we've made so far. Susan did point out some confusing or irrelevant things in the Warrant article, possibly due to the speed required to prepare the article to meet the TM deadline. She also detailed the role taken by the Acton Conservation Trust (ACT) in the acquisition. Susan pointed out that the more clarity there is in a land-acquisition Warrant article and motion, the better it is likely to go. A possible helpful resource for drafting an article for land purchases is "Drafting CPA Land Purchase Warrant Articles" written by the State Community Preservation Coalition. It provides boilerplate language for different scenarios.
- Roland Bartl pointed out that the Planning Department traditionally drafts CPA articles (Town Counsel drafts the motions), but Planning did not see this article in advance of its publication. Roland suggested that in the future, ACT (including Susan) should work with Planning. Peter suggested that the CPC should be reviewing CPC-related Warrant articles. He added some caution be taken with CP Coalition recommendations for Warrant articles: If you try to specify everything, things can backfire. Something that is noticed as being left out may become an issue. It may be better to keep it more general with "catch-all" language for whatever may fall under the umbrella of stewardship.
- Peter B wondered if private donations for 176 Central Street would be more than anticipated, would that reduce the \$ amount needed from the CPC? Susan showed that all \$ will be used because the Land Trust responsible for the land is so for perpetuity and related costs are not trivial.

IV. Award Letters

- The CPC reviewed the letters in the order presented in the packet prepared by Planning. The CPC offered changes and other recommendations for the letters that Robert duly noted. It was recommended that Trudy Khosla, Acton Congregational Church (ACC) Administrator, work with the historic preservation restriction prepared by the West Acton Baptist Church (WABC) for the ACC restriction. It was also urged that project reports use good photo documentation when applicable, and that the Acton Historical Commission, not the Historic District Commission or any other Town group, oversees historic preservation projects.
- It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to approve the award letters as changed in our discussion.

David Clough of the ACC thanked the CPC for all of its work and said that the ACC is getting ready to go with its projects.

V. Summer Meeting Schedule

- The CPC summer work is to update the Community Preservation Plan. Town Planning does some of the updating. This will include collapsing some of the tables that are getting lengthy. CPC members will give updates of their respective sections to Planning. When updating is complete, the CPC will meet to discuss, edit, and vote

to release the “Draft 2017 Community Preservation Plan”. Then there will be the annual Public Hearing to ascertain the needs, possibilities, resources, and preferences for Community Preservation, and to hear comments/questions on the Draft. The CPC will put out the revised (if necessary) Plan for final public comment. Finally, it will adopt the 2017 Plan and put together a fall meeting schedule.

The Planning Department will send out the current Plan with requests for edits, set a deadline, and the CPC will meet in August to elect new officers and consider the Plan draft.

The CPC agreed on August 11, and September 8 as dates for the next two meetings. Roland Bartl will send out an email asking about availability and released back to the Town all the other meeting dates previously scheduled by the CPC.

VI. Project Reports and Updates

- The WABC historic preservation restriction is done.
- The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is progressing.
- The State has accepted a contractor for the Assabet River Rail Trail. Bike lockers and rack on the north side of the train station are part of this project.

VII. Administrative Updates

- The CPA Study Committee has submitted a recommendation to increase the CPA surcharge from 1.5% to 3%. There will be a Fall TM with a Warrant article to make the increase part of a spring election. CPA Study Committee will disband and there will be a citizens committee to solicit support of the Warrant article. The BoS is expected to vote at its 05/23 meeting as to whether to support this effort.
- The Legislature has voted to put more money into the CPA fund. It looks like Acton will get about the same amount next year as it did this year.
- There is a big push now for Boston to join the CPA. If Boston joins, the state contribution to towns becomes a lot less.
- Roland documented two Open Space Set Aside Fund balance corrections that reduce the balance from \$1.951M to \$1.923M (with part of the reduction to account for Wright Hill debt service of ~\$16K). Roland Bourdon questioned the Wright Hill amount vs. the \$70K Wright Hill debt service appropriation as shown in the TM Warrant article. Roland Bartl will look at this again and give the CPC an update.

9:18 PM — It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.